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Bombay

7.12.45

And so, my Darling, begins the most trying period ever a man had to suffer. 'So near & yet so far'! The official sources of information have clamped down tighter than an oyster - you'd think there was another war on the way they've gone all secretive. Today is the 2<sup>nd</sup> & the next boat is the 12<sup>th</sup> - it begins to look like we're not sailing on that, but the cursed part of it all is, you can't say that sort of thing & mean it because tomorrow morning we might be whipped away on draft - just like that. In an effort to solicit news I've even gone so far as to give you a baby, & what a time you're having with it - Ay-yi-yi! But 'ant' man's gotta heart - 'Lak a rock cast in de sea' & he aint talkin'. Well - in the true Pubka Sahib manner, we'll just have to grin & bear it - haw, haw - what?

Of course one cannot but be very hearty & jolly with all the prospects in mind. I've had to start to get my images in their right perspective. Visualising you on the platform at Waterloo has, lately, been disconcerting to all concerned due to the fact that you will persist in meeting me in a bathing suit! I began

to believe that being out of England for 9 months had put me right out of touch with prevailing fashions, but, then again, it seemed hardly the rig for winter. I finally decided that your seemingly shameless outfit was the result of my intensive concentration of your Harting's epic, & my sub-conscious had come to regard you as a permanent Bathing Beauty. The obvious remedy - for I simply couldn't have you catching cold on that horrid old station platform - was to put aside the sight of Beauty Unadorned, & take in large eye-fulls of the other portrait wherein you make with the ~~most~~ sweetest smile mortal man ever did see, & whose other virtue, in this connection, is that you're wearing a dress. A recent recapture of the Waterloo Scene finds you in a pair of cami-knickers, stockings & umbrella - time & perseverance will do the trick, I don't doubt, altho I wish it had been summer-time when I needn't have dressed you at all.

Other images for which perspective needs adjustment revolve round the Blessington scene. A fool & his dream in this country are apt to run riot & I'm no exception. Lying back in the bunk at night the built mansions about you - to watch your grace & charm they've been designed by the most famous of architects & the results have usually been most pleasing - the house, the lawn, the tree-lined

drive, the lake & the lake, they're all been a setting & a back-  
 ground to you in garden dresses, evening dresses, tea gowns,  
 play-suits, & no clothes at all. All is natural & pleasing  
 & 'only man is vile' - that's me - of course I only brought  
 in the quotation to show I got education; I didn't  
 mean I was really vile, but I did mean that in  
 all these day & night dreams I stood back, playing  
 second-fiddle to a vision so lovely that me with my  
 fleshy ordinariness was an incongruity that usually  
 had to be expelled from the picture. It's funny about  
 that last bit, because, feeling I was only dreaming,  
 you'd imagine I could build myself up into no end  
 of an Adonis with brains - but there it was, there I  
 was, rather, just a gump who stood back looking  
 open-mouthed at you with all that array of pomp  
 & beauty. Freud could probably explain it. Now  
 that's all very well but you might probably say,  
 & I most certainly say, where do I come in in  
 the matter of grabbing myself a slice of cake  
 from the festive board of life. Having the privilege  
 of looking on at scenes that make the nymph at  
 Dawn look like a milking cow, & my lady of  
 Drayford Yates like a serving wench, ~~is~~ all very  
 well is the aesthetic sense, & no doubt showed  
 me art in its purest form, but that's no good  
 to ~~be~~ a man, returning from the wars, who likes to  
 keep his hands busy. To prepare me for the time

To come when at a full-blooded male, & a husband to boot, & I claim <sup>my wife</sup> from the confines of the modern equivalent of the ~~charity~~ Chastity Belt, (you know, "No love, no nothing, until ma baby comes home"), I gotta have dreams suitable for the Occasion. Dear old Blessington, so plebeian, so suburban, so matter-of-fact, is just what dear old St. Joan ordered, for when contemplating No. 12 I see myself fitting in with you like a well made glove on beauty's hand. No longer am I fleshily ordinary, no longer do I just gape - at far as I'm concerned the whole aspect is infinitely ~~more~~ better balanced, & whilst you retain that queenly ~~look~~ loveliness we're no longer the lady of the lake & the lake with nobody's business but your own, (come to think of it what on earth did you do but glide gracefully over the lawns or dance nakedly amongst the shrubbery? You never ate, poor thing!), you're now my active partner in all the activities that go to make a married life worth living. I feel rather snug & self-satisfied about the whole thing because I feel I've resumed my sex to its proper level - what level? - you should just see my dreams, yah yah!

One more image I must get right. You'll probably laugh or get annoyed at this one. All

through this Indian drama, purely for no particular reason at all except that I love you. I've regarded you, when thinking of the character aspect, as a very high-minded young lady whose sense of marital duties & responsibilities has kept your eyes turned towards the East with unswerving devotion, & with a ~~own~~ vow in your heart that of all men in the world I am the only one. You must understand, Angel, that this sort of image was conjured up in those more concided moments of mine when I placed myself on a pedestal & refused to visualize any sort of situation wherein I was not constantly worshipped by you with little or no effort on my part to justify such worship - or just day-dreams, we all get 'em. It's essential, <sup>too</sup> that you understand that whilst this sort of image was solely for effect in certain circumstances, the antithesis does not make you out to be a woman of loose morals. When I adjust this particular image I'm not adjusting you, my sweet, I'm adjusting myself. I've got to get down off this pedestal, stop regarding you as the dutiful & faithful wife for convenience sake, & get down to the realisation that after 9 months of separation I've got to get back into the swing of courtship which must surely go on even in marriage. Thus, in my latest dreams, you are the undatable - as yet - & I have to devise ways

+ means of getting underneath that veneer of unapproach-  
ability to reach what I know to be there, a desire  
that I be successful in my efforts. It's no use you  
saying, Baby, that all this is unnecessary, (or are  
you saying that?), for I know that to rest on one's  
laurels in the matter of love is fatal to that love. I  
pleen myself before you, prove my love in a hundred  
ways, declare my timeless devotion, pay heed to all  
those necessary attentions, + in general make up for  
all this lost time that endangered the personal  
contact. Maybe I'm a little hard on myself in my  
image, + maybe I make you to be more frigid than  
you could possibly be under any circumstances, but  
being cloth-minded for all this time, + now to be  
thrown into a situation demanding quick action, inclines  
me to be somewhat on the tough side - a sort of  
Commando course in love bringing quick results.  
You'll see the results of all this mental energy  
when I get home for the present emergency has  
brought forth some very cute ideas - I like that  
one where I suddenly burst into your room + you're  
----- no, why should I spoil the scene by letting  
on what happens - watch out now, I don't knock.

I'll babble or like this for days, darling,  
in letters after letters - always the same theme -

Love.

Les

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